

CALIFORNIA
Board
of
Psychology

1999/2000 Strategic Plan

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# INTRODUCTION

The California Board of Psychology (BOP) dates back to 1958 when the first psychologists were *certified* in the state. In 1967, the Psychology Licensing Law was enacted by the Legislature which: 1) defined and protected the practice of psychology, 2) protected the title "psychologist" and 3) changed certification to licensure. It was at this time that regulatory boards shifted their primary focus to protection of the public. The BOP is one of approximately thirty regulatory entities which exist under the organizational structure of the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA). Historically, the BOP has been closely affiliated with the Medical Board of California.

The BOP consists of nine members (five licensed psychologists and four public members) who serve four-year terms (a maximum of two terms). The Governor appoints the five licensed members and two public members. Another public member is appointed by the Senate Rules Committee, and the third by the Speaker of the Assembly. Public members cannot be licensed by the BOP or by any other DCA healing arts board.

The BOP appoints an executive officer as its administrator. The executive officer serves solely in the interests of the consumers of psychological services in California as does the BOP. The executive officer oversees the board's civil service staff and ensures that all of its programs function efficiently and effectively.

The BOP is funded totally through license, application, and examination fees. It receives absolutely no tax money from the General Fund of the State of California.

The BOP regulates over 16,000 licensed psychologists, over 2,000 registered psychological assistants and approximately 200 registered psychologists.

Licensed psychologists may practice psychology independently in any setting and must possess a doctoral degree which meets licensure requirements and must have successfully completed 3,000 hours of qualifying supervised professional experience. To renew a license, a psychologist must complete 36 hours of approved continuing education every two years.

Psychological assistants are unlicensed individuals who are registered to a licensed psychologist or to a board certified psychiatrist as an employee to provide limited psychological services under the licensed psychologist's direct supervision. Psychological assistants must possess a qualifying master's degree.

Registered psychologists must possess a doctoral degree which meets licensure requirements and must have completed at least 1,500 hours of qualifying supervised professional experience. Registered psychologists are registered only to function at non-profit community agencies which receive a minimum of 25 percent of their funding from some governmental source. Registered psychologists may not function outside of this restricted and specifically defined setting.





The Board of Psychology protects the health, safety and welfare of consumers of psychological services.

# VISION

The Board of Psychology will assure the protection of consumers of psychological services through its licensing, enforcement and educational outreach programs. These programs will set examples of efficiency through application of new technologies. All consumers will have access to the highest quality psychological services.

# **BOP FUNCTIONS**

The BOP is dedicated to ensure that psychologists provide safe, effective and ethical psychological services to consumers. The BOP's activities fall into four broad categories.

### Examination and Licensing

The BOP works to ensure that those entering the profession of psychology possess minimal competency to practice psychology independently and safely and that those already licensed maintain competency through mandated continuing education requirements. This is achieved by requiring applicants for a license to possess an appropriate doctorate degree from an approved or accredited university, college, professional school or comparable educational institution and by requiring the completion of a minimum of 3,000 hours of supervised professional experience. Each license applicant must also pass a national written examination and a California oral examination.

#### **Enforcement**

The BOP's enforcement efforts are focused on protecting the vulnerable consumer population from exploitative, incompetent and otherwise dangerous licensed psychologists. The BOP investigates and mediates consumer complaints. Sometimes valid complaints involving no patient harm are closed with a verbal or written warning, a competency examination or an educational review. Other more serious complaints may result in disciplinary action - reprimand, probation, suspension, or revocation - against the licensee. Proven or admitted sexual misconduct with a patient results in mandatory license revocation. The board's citation and fine program provides another tool that bolsters enforcement options.

#### **Continuing Education**

Continued competency by licensees is assured through mandatory continuing education requirements. The law requires that licensees certify to earning 36 hours of continuing education every two years upon license renewal. The board's recognized accreditation agency is the California Psychological Association Accrediting Agency (CPAAA). The accrediting agency approves providers pursuant to the board's regulations and tracks units of continuing education earned by every psychologist. The accrediting agency provides the board with quarterly lists of those licensees who are deficient in continuing education requirements. The board conducts a 100 percent audit on all such deficient licensees.

#### **Education and Outreach**

The BOP ensures that consumers are educated to make informed choices about psychological services through information provided on the Internet, through various brochures, press releases for every disciplinary decision, public service announcements and the BOP Update. Educates the profession on the latest regulatory and legislative changes through the Internet and speaking engagements at educational institutions, professional associations and other organizations.



# STRATEGIC GOALS

The BOP has established six strategic goals which provide the framework for furthering its mission.

#### **Enforcement**

Ensure that exploitative, negligent, incompetent and unlicensed practice of psychology is reduced through proactive and consistent enforcement of the Psychology Licensing Law and the BOP's regulations. Ensure that the Psychology Licensing Law and the BOP's regulations are current and up-to-date in defining causes for discipline and the practice of psychology. (Target Date: Ongoing)

#### Licensing

Ensure that all applicants are minimally qualified to provide psychological services with safety to the public. (Target Date: Ongoing)

#### **Continuing Education**

Ensure that all licensees earn 36 units of continuing education every renewal period. Conduct 100 percent audit on deficient licensees and cite and fine those who are not in compliance. Conduct annual audits of the Board's recognized accrediting agency. (Target Date: Ongoing)

#### Education and Outreach

Educate consumers to make informed choices about psychological services. Make available current up-to-date information about the regulation of the profession of psychology to licensees, applicants, trainees and any other interested parties. (Target Date: Ongoing)

#### **Regulation & Legislation**

Ensure that all statutes and regulations are necessary, clear, and equitable to consumers, applicants, licensees and registrants. Monitor all legislative/ regulatory proposals and ensure that all fiscal workload issues are anticipated. (Target Date: Ongoing)

#### Operational Efficiency

Increase organizational efficiency and cost effectiveness. Enhance the Consumer Affairs and Applicant Tracking Systems. Cooperate with the Department of Consumer Affairs in the development and implementation of the Integrated Consumer Protection System. (Target Date: Ongoing)

# **ACTION PLAN**

The action plan is a fluid framework for the activities that are conducted by the BOP in fulfilling its mission and meeting its goals.



# **ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM**

#### Goal

Ensure that incompetent, negligent or otherwise dangerous and unethical psychological services and unlicensed activity are minimized through proactive and consistent enforcement of the Psychology Licensing Law and the BOP's Regulations.

### **Board Committee Lead Responsibility**

**Enforcement Committee** 

### Strategic Objectives

- 1. Take over probation monitoring in-house. (Target Date: 06/30/00)
- 2. Develop procedures for scheduling and conducting board interviews with problem probationers. (Target Date 06/30/00)
- 3. Explore methodology to provide licensing and enforcement information on the Internet for consumer verification. (Target Date 06/30/00)
- 4. Explore interagency sharing of fingerprint clearance information. (Target Date: 06/30/00)
- 5. Develop a method to train, evaluate and administer the expert component of the enforcement program. (Target Date: 06/30/00)

# **Ongoing Objectives**

- 1. Continue to respond to and resolve complaints in a timely and efficient manner.
- 2. Educate consumers through prompt and relevant press releases, consumer brochures, Internet presence, the BOP Update and continued participation in the Local Talk program.
- Increase advocacy through public presentations, Internet presence, BOP Update and educate the profession on the risks of practicing without complying with all the laws affecting the current practice of psychology.
- 4. Develop and monitor statistics on all enforcement activities and audit to ensure 100 percent continuing education compliance.
- 5. Utilize cite and fine and the telephone disconnect law for unlicensed activity.
- 6. Assure 100 percent probationer compliance.
- 7. Revoke the license or registration of any licensee or registrant who engages in sexual contact with a current patient or with a patient whose therapy has been terminated within two years.

- 8. Review and evaluate billing accountability and efficiency of Medical Board complaint intake and processing.
- 9. Review and evaluate billing accountability and efficiency of Medical Board investigations.
- 10. Review and evaluate billing accountability and efficiency of the Office of Attorney General.
- 11. Review and evaluate billing accountability and efficiency of the Office of Administrative Hearings.
- 12. Explore BOP utilizing retired judges to hear cases.
- 13. Offer board expertise and participation in any training for investigators, Deputy Attorneys General and Administrative Law Judges.
- 14. Provide mandated training for expert case reviewers.
- 15. Continue to report disciplinary actions to ASPPB National Data Bank.
- 16. Update Disciplinary Guidelines.
- 17. Solicit input from experts to specifically define by name, those psychological tests which should be restricted to use by licensed psychologists in order to protect the public.
- 18. Continue to require fingerprint card clearances pursuant to policy # L-98-03.

#### Potential Performance Indicators

- 1. More victims coming forward to support ongoing cases.
- 2. Reduced number of repeat actions for unlicensed activities and formerly disciplined licensees/registrants.
- 3. Higher quality expert work product.
- 4. Website hits.

# **LICENSING PROGRAM**

## Goal

Ensure that all licensees and registrants are minimally qualified to provide psychological services with safety to the public.

### Board Committee(s) Lead Responsibility

Credentials Committee Examination Committee Supervision Committee

### Strategic Objectives

- 1. Overhaul and streamline supervision regulations. (Target Date: 06/30/00)
- 2. Develop oral examination commissioner training video. (Target Date: 06/30/00)
- 3. Implement the processing of psychological assistants and registered psychologists in the Applicant Tracking System. (Target Date: 06/30/00)
- 4. Include doctoral degree on wall license certificates. (Target Date: 01/01/00)
- 5. Update all application and supplemental forms. (Target Date: 01/01/00)
- 6. Explore the possibility of accepting credit card payments for various fees. (Target Date: 06/30/00)
- 7. Explore the possibility of filing application forms on-line. (Target Date: 06/30/00)
- 8. Develop a bank of valid jurisprudence questions. (Target Date: 01/01/00)
- 9. Develop a supervision brochure once 1387 is clarified. (Target Date: 06/30/00)
- 10. Work with ASPPB to develop a national oral examination and related guidelines. (Target Date: 06/30/00)

### **Ongoing Objectives**

- 1. Maximize use of Internet and other technology to provide relevant and timely information to consumers, trainees, applicants, psychologists, psychological assistants and registrants
- 2. Maintain increased efficiency and customer service with technology and enhanced training.
- 3. Review and evaluate efficiency of various DCA support services (renewal systems, cashiering, information services).
- 4. Provide timely and quality responses and information regarding:
  - Applications and processing;
  - Renewals;
  - Testing;
  - License issuance
  - Relevant records and retrieval ability; and
  - Examination appeals
- 5. Utilize ATS to produce statistical reports and to ensure timeliness in application processing.
- 6. Continue to enhance ATS and update the procedure manual as needed.
- 7. Ensure that supervised professional experience requirements are relevant to the current day practice of psychology.
- 8. Develop, monitor and enhance statistics from the licensing program.
- 9. Ensure that examination fees cover the costs of the developing, purchasing, grading and administering the examinations.
- 10. Work with the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards to computerize the administration of the Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology.
- 11. Ensure continued written and oral examination enhancements through continued close collaboration with the DCA Office of Examination Resources (OER).
- 12. Conduct legally defensible written and oral examinations to test for minimal competency.
- 13. Continue to develop and implement exit surveys for candidates and commissioners.
- 14. Ensure quality training for oral commissioners.

#### **Performance Indicators**

- 1. Reduced processing time and increased quality review.
- 2. Increased efficiency in examination scheduling and license issuance.
- 3. Enhanced validity of examinations.
- 4. Reduced number of examination appeals.
- 5. Decrease in number of telephone calls to the BOP from applicants and initial licensees/registrants.
- 6. Feedback from exit polls.
- 7. Website hits.

# **CONTINUING EDUCATION**

#### Goal

Ensure continuing competence of all licensees.

### **Board Committee Lead Responsibility**

Continuing Education Committee

### **Strategic Objectives**

- 1. Staff is to provide quarterly reports to the Board for monthly renewals to include:
  - A. Number of renewals
  - B. Number of deficient licensees
  - C. Number of deficient licensees for whom in-house investigation was deemed necessary.
  - D. Number of deficient licensees who made up deficiency (Target Date: 01/01/00)
- 2. Provide feedback to CPAAA regarding criticism of providers for possible audit by CPAAA. (Target Date: 01/01/00)

## **Ongoing Objectives**

- 1. Work with CPAAA to update CE regulations as needed.
- 2. Perform annual audit of the board recognized accrediting agency.
- 3. Work with APA on common interests.
- 4. Update procedure manual for Continuing Education Technician as needed.

#### **Performance Indicators**

- 1. Decrease in the number of deficient licensees.
- 2. Decrease in the number of consumer complaints alleging incompetence.
- 3. Decrease the number of complaints by continuing education providers and participants.
- 4. Website hits.

# **EDUCATION AND OUTREACH**

#### Goal

Educate consumers to make informed choices about psychological services. Ensure that the profession is continually aware of the actions of the BOP with respect to licensing requirements, regulation promulgation and interpretation, policy statements and general information affecting trainees, applicants, registrants and licensees.

### **Board Committee Lead Responsibility**

Consumer Education Committee

### Strategic Objectives

- 1. Develop on-line consumer satisfaction survey. (Target Date: 06/30/00)
- 2. Develop programs to inform the public about the principles of informed consent. (Target Date: 06/30/00)
- 3. Develop programs to inform the public about the differences in therapeutic techniques. (Target Date: 06/30/00)
- 4. Develop programs to inform the public about the differences in mental health specialties. (Target Date: 06/30/00)
- 5. Proactively communicate with psychology training programs and internships. (Target Date: 06/30/00)

# **Ongoing Objectives**

- 1. Invite various speakers to BOP meetings to continually update BOP members on latest trends related to the regulation of the profession.
- 2. Explore use of public service announcements.
- 3. Maximize the Internet to disseminate BOP information and educational materials to the public.
- 4. Continue consultation relationship with DCA Communications and Education Division.
- 5. Publish BOP Update
- 6. Continue speaking engagements with educational institutions, organizations and consumer groups.
- 7. Continue with press releases for every final enforcement case.

- 8. Ensure that information relating to the regulation of the profession of psychology is available for use by all who may be affected by the information.
- 9. Maintain communication with professional associations and educational institutions.
- 10. Include summaries of statutory, regulatory and policy changes in BOP Update and Website.

#### Performance Indicators

- 1. Increased inquiries to verify licensure.
- 2. Increased coverage of BOP cases in response to press releases.
- 3. Decreased consumer complaints.
- 4. Reduction in violations of the laws and regulations relating to the practice of psychology.
- 5. Reduction in repeat offenses in such things as violation of supervision regulations.
- 6. Positive trends in applicant and licensee satisfaction surveys.
- 7. Website hits.

# **REGULATION & LEGISLATION**

#### Goal

Ensure that all statutes and regulations are necessary and easily understandable and equitable to consumers and the profession.

#### **Board Lead Responsibility**

Regulation and Legislation Committee

### Strategic Objectives

### Regulations

- 1. Amend section 1380.1 of the regulations to correct the Board's location of principal office. (Target Date: 06/30/00)
- 2. Amend section 1396 to require supervisors of psychological assistants, registered psychologists and interns to get a signed release from patients so that supervisors are authorized to access their psychological assistants' records. (Target Date: 06/30/00)
- 3. Add a regulation that would require registered psychologists to notify the Board within 30 days of termination of the registration. (Target Date: 06/30/00)
- 4. Clean up section 1381.5 it repeats the phrase "upon the filing of a new application" twice. (Target Date: 06/30/00)
- 5. Clean up section 1391.7 it refers to section 2914(d) and should refer to section 2914(c). (Target Date: 06/30/00)
- 6. Clean up section 1388.6(b) change "has been licensed" to "is licensed." (Target Date: 06/30/00)
- 7. Delete section 1397.65(c)(8) which requires self-evaluations and post tests for CE courses. (Target Date: 06/30/00)
- 8. Amend sections 1387.3(e) and 1391 to state that the supervisee cannot have any type of decision-making authority which may affect the status or employment of their supervisors. (Target Date: 06/30/00)
- 9. Amend section 1380.5 Filing of Address to define "immediately" as "within 30 days."
- 10. Amend cite and fine regulations (section 1398) to allow citation and fine for failure to notify the Board of a change of address within 30 days.
- 11. Amend 1397.69 Continuing Education Participant Fees Currently states that the \$35.00 fee is to be paid to an accrediting agency to report non-accrediting agency-approved courses taken by participant as defined in sections 1397.61(d), 1397.63(b) and 1397.64(a)(2)(C). However, section 1397.63(b) states that any licensee who receives

- approved continuing education credit by serving as an oral commissioner shall submit verification and the course attendee fee specified in section 1397.68 "Provider Fees." It does not refer back to section 1397.69. These sections conflict. We need to change either section 1397.63(b) or 1397.69. (Target Date: 06/30/00)
- 12. Amend section 1397.63 Credit given to commissioners for their participation at the oral examination to change the number of credits given to correlate with the number of exams administered.
- 13. Amend section 1397.70 to clarify what happens when a licensee is non-compliant with the continuing education regulations for six months.

#### Legislation

- 1. Add section 2960(s) to add incompetence as a cause for disciplinary action. (Target Date: 06/30/00)
- 2. Seek legislation that requires licensees/registrants to display their licenses/registrations in a prominent place at their principle practice location. (Target Date: 06/30/00)
- 3. Clean up amendment to section 2962(a)(4) needs to read at least one year for early termination of probation" rather than "or probation." (Target Date: 06/30/00)

## **Ongoing Objectives**

1. Review and amend all regulations pursuant to the following six criteria:

a. Necessity: Is there demonstrated evidence that there is a

need for the regulation?

b. Authority: Does the BOP have legislated authority to

adopt the regulation?

c. Consistency: Does the regulation conflict with other

regulations or statutes?

d. Clarity: Can the regulations be easily understood by

those affected?

e. Non-duplication: Do the regulations duplicate other regulations

or statutes?

f. Reference: Which statute does the regulation implement,

interpret, or make specific?

2. Design legislative/regulation strategies to achieve the mission of the BOP.

- 3. Update Disciplinary Guidelines.
- 4. Enhance and improve supervision regulations (1387).
- 5. Amend regulations to improve and clarify the continuing education requirements.

### **Performance Indicators**

- 1. Reduction in number of unqualified persons utilizing protected psychological tests.
- 2. Enhanced clarity in definition of the practice of psychology.
- 3. Website hits.



# OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

#### Goal

Increase organizational efficiency and cost effectiveness

### **Board Committee Lead Responsibility**

**Executive Officer** 

### Strategic Objectives

- 1. Pursue the addition of a Staff Manager I position. (Target Date: 06/30/00)
- 2. Acquire technology necessary to transfer licensure and enforcement information from Teale to the Internet for on-line verification capability. (Target Date: 06/30/00)
- 3. Participate in the new Interactive Consumer Protection System (ICPS) if the opportunity is presented. (Target Date: 06/30/00)
- 4. The overtime budget line item should be increased if no additional staff is approved by the Department of Finance. (Target Date: 06/30/00)

# **Ongoing Objectives**

- 1. Strengthen staff training and development.
- 2. Update board member and employee orientation package.
- 3. Continue efforts to reduce costs of operations while improving performance.
- 4. Review and evaluate budgetary documents to identify errors and potential cost-saving measures.
- 5. Conduct periodic progress review of BOP's strategic plan to determine goal completion.
- 6. Ensure equipment and technology are current.
- 7. Amend employee duty statements and desk manuals as duties change.
- 8. Update policy binder as needed upon BOP adoption.
- 9. Evaluate Executive Officer's performance annually.
- 10. Provide staff with annual performance evaluations.
- 11. Provide Board member training as issues arise.
- 12. Represent Board at all necessary out-of-state and in-state ASPPB, APA, CLEAR, etc. meetings.

# BOP'S EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Although this strategic plan did not include a formal survey of external stakeholders, the board drew upon the following information to identify factors and trends which are likely to influence the environment in years to come:

- Number and type of complaints received and causes for discipline rendered
- Feedback from professional organizations, schools, licensees, registrants, applicants and training institutions
- Queries and other contacts with consumers
- > The media image of psychologists
- > The effects of the Internet
- Legislative and political trends
- > Relationship with the Department of Consumer Affairs
- Managed care

All these elements were listed, discussed, and rated. The most critical were distilled in the Strategic Issues which are listed in this document.

# **BOP'S INTERNAL ASSESSMENT**

In developing the Strategic Plan, the BOP assessed the internal factors which either support or limit the achievement of its mission.

#### Strengths

- Dedicated, experienced and competent staff
- Cooperation from professional associations
- ➤ Innovative new ideas
- Good working relationship and reputation with DCA, Medical Board investigations and with the Office of the Attorney General
- Board and staff commitment to consumer protection

#### Weaknesses

- The need to educate elected officials about BOP issues
- Small staff already fully involved in performing critical functions
- ➤ Low information dissemination on pending legislation
- Enforcement and licensing programs lack communication/input regarding the effects of related regulatory changes/proposals
- > Red tape:
  - a) Mandatory approval by Department of Personnel Administration of represented employees' hotel room rates
  - b) Restrictions by Department of General Services preventing timely purchase of adequate telecommunication equipment.
- Lack of Staff Manager I (supervisory) position